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FM AMEMBASSY SKOPJE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7398
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE 0330
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SKOPJE 000360

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/01/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [NATO](#) [MK](#)
SUBJECT: MACEDONIA: FOREIGN MINISTER ASKS U.S. TO INFLUENCE
ODIHR REPORT ON ELECTIONS

REF: SKOPJE 359

Classified By: POLOFF BOSWORTH FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) Following the June 1 early Parliamentary elections, marred by violence and fraud (reftel), FM Milososki called to ask the Ambassador to influence the initial ODIHR report on the elections, due out later that day. Specifically, he asked the Ambassador to ensure that the report adopted his party's positive view of the elections, namely that there were problems in only 1-2% of the polling stations located in one part of the country and that the elections were generally free and fair. He suggested that highlighting the problems (of fraud, intimidation, and violence) in Northwestern Macedonia would fuel inter-ethnic conflict, arguing that light coverage of the problems and a positive tone would be best for internal stability. Milososki reported that he had also called the Head of ODIHR's Election Observation Mission, Ambassador Robert Barry, to make the same request.

¶2. (C) Unpleasantly surprised at the overt plea to influence ODIHR's report on the elections, the Ambassador informed Milososki that we have no influence over ODIHR's independent reporting, and would not seek such influence if we could. She further noted that her personal observations and those of the Embassy's 26 monitoring teams indicated that serious problems occurred in far more than 1 to 2% of polling stations. The Ambassador advised the FM not to suggest that because problems occurred primarily in ethnic Albanian areas that this did not reflect on Macedonia as a whole. She added that Macedonia is one country, and the GoM contributes to the idea of separatism by attempting to avoid responsibility for enforcing laws and guaranteeing rights equally throughout the country. She told the FM that salvaging the elections would require massive re-runs of not only the approximately 60 polling stations closed due to violence or other serious irregularities, but also of all polling stations in which there were credible reports of irregularities. The EUSR reported to us later on June 2 that Milososki had made the same call to him, and that he had been equally forceful in rejecting the request to influence the ODIHR report. Comment: Clearly directed by PM Gruevski, FM Milososki's calls show that despite the clear margin of victory, VMRO-DPMNE is concerned that its mandate may be weakened by widespread criticisms of the elections. This is the first time to our knowledge that a GoM has overtly tried to influence the ODIHR report. End Comment.

Milovanovic